

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 30, 2005

H.E. Christian Blickenstorfer
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Embassy of Switzerland
2900 Cathedral Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Ambassador Blickenstorfer:

We write to thank and applaud your government's recent announcement of its intention to convene the states parties of the Geneva Convention for the purpose of adopting the additional protocol necessary to provide for the establishment and use of a third neutral symbol for humanitarian purposes. The process of coordination and consultation by your government is deeply appreciated and we are gratified by your success to date.

This important step has been held in abeyance for far too long and, we would add, for reasons we believe are invalid and immoral. The humanitarian rationale for adoption of the third neutral symbol, the red diamond, or crystal, is in our view, overwhelming. By moving to adopt the third symbol, the states parties of the Geneva Convention and the members of the Red Cross movement will finally begin moving beyond a painful and long-standing political dispute, one that has little to do with humanitarian objectives.

Like many others we are deeply concerned about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and we strongly support our government's ongoing efforts to bring closure to this dreadful chapter in the history of both peoples. We are convinced, however, that the adoption of the third neutral symbol, a step of crucial importance for Israel's humanitarian aid society, the Magen David Adom, should never have been linked to the fate of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Even now, we are aware of the efforts of some parties to strengthen this linkage, and attempt to prevent both holding the conference and adoption of the additional protocol.

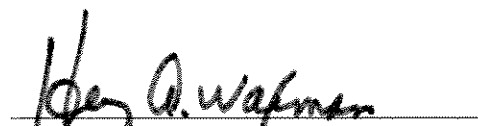

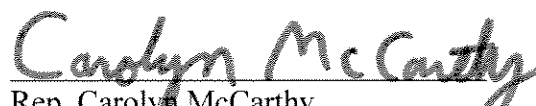

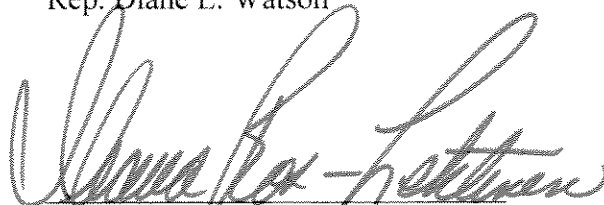
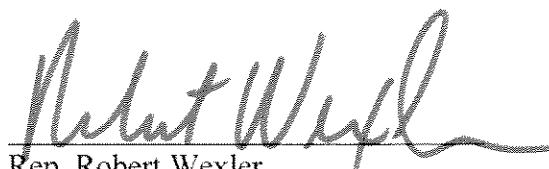
This type of political belligerency must not be allowed to succeed. International humanitarian law is, quintessentially, about principle; the idea that there are certain standards of conduct that can not be breached under any circumstance or for any calculation of political efficacy or utility. There can be no question that the political hostage-taking utilized by some seeking advantage in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict stands in diametrical conflict to the fundamental values of international humanitarian law. It must not be rewarded.

Consequently, we want to encourage your government, in the strongest terms, to stand up to those who are threatening to withhold consensus from the meeting of the states parties and the

Red Cross movement. The onus must be placed on them to explain and justify before the international community why the Red Cross movement's aims and objectives must be subordinated to their political goals. They must bear the burden of blocking consensus on a fundamental humanitarian issue: the adoption of a third neutral symbol providing perfect equality to all nations and serving the needs of the Red Cross movement in circumstances where the presence of either a Red Cross or a Red Crescent might conflict with purely humanitarian objectives.

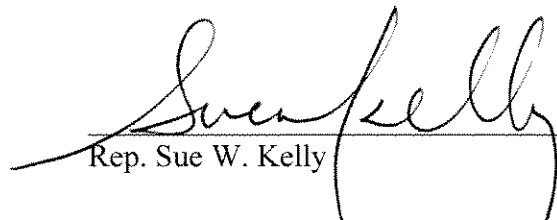
As the depositary state for the Geneva Conventions, Switzerland has a key role to play. Your nation's efforts have given us great encouragement for the struggle ahead and we will not forget the challenges Swiss diplomacy has overcome to get this far. We can assure you that you will have our strongest support in carrying this important project through to its just and positive conclusion.

Sincerely,


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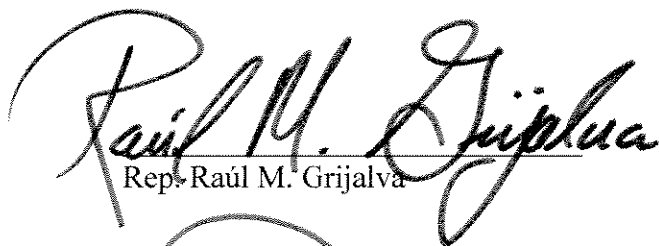
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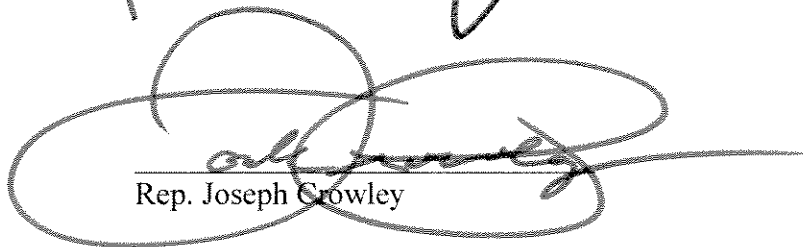
Rep. Brad Sherman



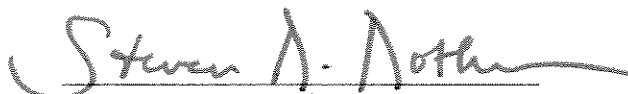
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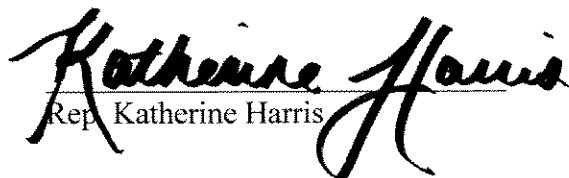
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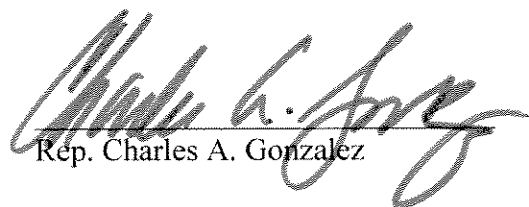

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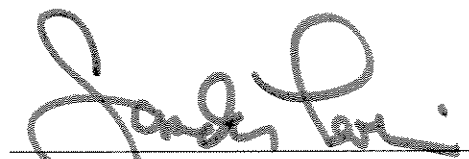

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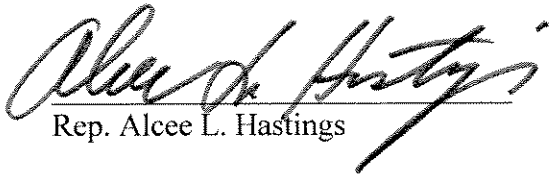

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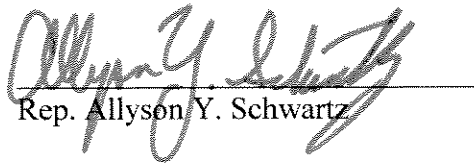

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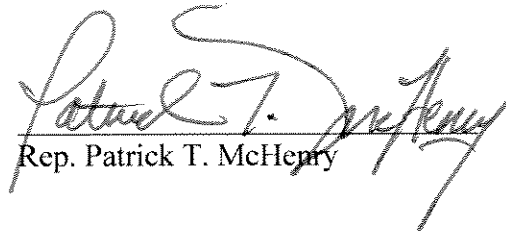

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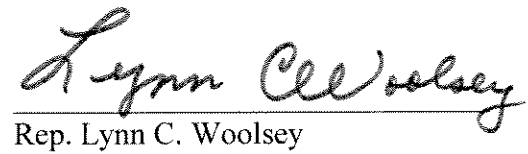

Rep. Alcee L. Hastings

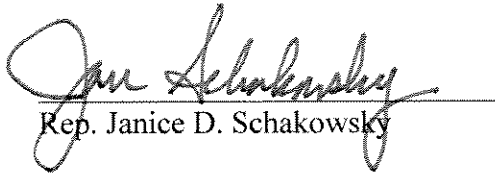

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